

THE 24th DAY OF THE MONTH OF OCTOBER
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY MARTYR ARETHAS & THOSE WITH HIM
AT VESPERS

On “Lord, I have cried ...,” 3 Stichera of the holy martyrs, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: “O all-praised martyrs ...”:

Thou didst place thy courage * in opposition to the savagery of the Jews, * O all-praised martyr Arethas, * and wast revealed to be victorious * by the grace of God, * bringing to Christ, * O glorious one, * a militant choir of martyrs of every age, ** composed of all races.

O all-glorious Arethas, * having formed a beautiful choir * of thy sacred fellow martyrs, * thou didst struggle with them, * completing the good race * and the good fight * of thy most courageous contest. * Wherefore, entreat Christ, * that He grant peace and great mercy ** unto our souls.

The divinely wise martyred virgins, * enkindled by the love of Christ, * unmindful of the weakness of their nature, * but manifestly strengthened * by the power of God, * trampled upon the deception of the enemy; * and, unafraid of the pain of torture, ** feared not the fiery furnace.

Glory ..., the composition of Anatolius, in Tone IV:

With oneness of mind, O ye faithful, and with hymnody let us honor today the most glorious chief shepherd Arethas and those with him; for he denounced the most iniquitous one and shed his blood in confession of Christ. Hence, a cloud of fire consumed the face of the earth, in reproof of the ungodliness of the all-iniquitous ones. Wherefore, O Christ God, Who strengthened the spiritual athletes for Thy glorification, by the supplications of Thy saints preserve us also from temptations and tribulations, in that Thou art the Master of all.

Both now ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: “As one valiant among the martyrs ...”:

Stavrotheotokion: **U**pon beholding Thee, * the Lamb and Shepherd, upon the Tree, * the ewe-lamb who bore Thee lamented, * and maternally exclaimed to Thee: * “O most desired Son, * how is it that Thou art suspended upon the tree of the Cross? * How is it that Thine arms and legs are nailed * by the iniquitous ones, O long-suffering Word, ** and that Thou hast shed Thy blood, O Master?”

On the Aposticha, Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

Understanding beforehand the wicked and evil plan of the unbelieving Jews, ye struggled toward suffering for Christ with boldness of spirit; for Him Who of old, in the time of the law, saved them from Egypt in the wilderness they condemned to the Cross. And so now also with you, they, infected with unbelief, pass from words to

deeds and condemned you to the fire. But, suffering with manly patience and oneness of mind, ye showed yourselves to be marvelous among martyrs. As ye have boldness before God, entreat Him, that our souls be delivered from grievous transgressions.

Both now ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: “O most glorious wonder ...”:

Stavrotheotokion: “**W**hat is this sight which I see, * which mine eyes behold, O Master? * How is it that Thou Who dost sustain all creation, * art lifted up upon the Tree and diest, * granting life unto all? * thus said the Theotokos weeping, * upon seeing God and man * Who had shone forth ineffably from her ** hanging upon the Cross.

Troparion of the holy martyrs, in Tone I:

By the pangs of the saints, whereby they suffered for Thee, * be Thou entreated, O Lord; * and heal all our pain, we pray Thee, ** Who art the Lover of mankind.

AT MATINS

Canon of the holy martyrs, with 4 Troparia, the acrostic whereof is:

“With songs we hymn the assembly of martyrs with divine beauty”;

The composition of Theophanes, in Tone VIII:

ODE I

Irmos: Let us, O ye people, send up a hymn * unto our wondrous God * Who hath freed Israel from bondage, * chanting a hymn of victory * and crying aloud: * We sing unto Thee, O only Master.

O martyr Arethas, all-blessed spiritual athlete of God, illumine my mind by thy supplications and those of the martyrs who suffered with thee, that I may hymn your radiant and divine memory.

Having manifestly acquired a life in the heavens above, O divinely blessed one, by emulating Christ, with a desire for martyrdom thou didst give thyself over to the iniquitous Jews, O divinely wise one.

The all-iniquitous and most unrighteous Jews, violating the word of God, destroyed the divinely elect flock of Christ; yet they accepted condemnation with upright and divine intent.

Having trodden the path which leadeth to heaven surely, O all-praised Arethas, thou didst lead to Christ a company of martyrs assembled of every age and class.

Theotokion: With hymns, O ye faithful, let us praise the most holy Mary, the joyous Mother of God, the calm haven, the intercessor for all the faithful.

ODE III

Irmos: O Lord, Creator of the vault of Heaven * and Builder of the Church, * do Thou strengthen me in Thy love, O Summit of desire, * O Support of the faithful, * O only Lover of mankind.

Seeing Thy Church established by the grace of the Cross, the all-iniquitous children of the Jews, consumed by jealousy, pitilessly tortured Thy children with multifarious wounds, O Thou Who alone lovest mankind.

The impious ones, possessed of a venomous tongue and blaspheming Thee, O Savior, slaughtered those who believed on Thee, Who had delivered them from the ancient torment of our first parents.

O Christ, Who alone hast fashioned the hearts of all with Thy divine hand: who can fathom the depths of Thy forethought? For Thou didst give over to wolves the flock which Thou hadst gathered.

Thy divinely wise flock, cut down by the swords of the barbarians, earnestly called upon Thee: “Accept our spirits and souls, O Savior, and guide them to the light of Thy kingdom!”

Theotokion: In that thou alone hast given birth to the hypostatic Life, O most pure one, thou hast led me up again to life, who of old wast slain. And, stricken thereby, most malicious death hath manifestly burst asunder.

Sessional Hymn of the holy martyrs, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: “Of the Wisdom ...”:

Armed with the power of the Cross, and having fortified thy city with faith, thou didst put the tyrant’s savagery to shame by thy deeds; and as a model of divine hymnody, thou didst lead martyrs to Christ. Wherefore, assembling, we honor thy most festive memory as is meet, O all-famed Arethas. Entreat Christ God, O all-glorious passion-bearer, that He grant remission of sins to those who honor thy holy memory with love.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone VIII:

From the snares of enemies visible and invisible, * we have been overcome by the storms of our uncountable sins, * and fleeing unto the safe harbor of thy goodness O pure one, * we have thee as our rampart and sure protection. * Wherefore we thy servants beseech thee * to ceaselessly make fervent supplication, O most pure one, * unto Him who seedlessly became incarnate from thee, * that those who worthily hymn thee ** may be granted the remission of their sins.

Stavrotheotokion: Upon beholding the Lamb, Shepherd and Redeemer * upon the Cross, * the ewe-lamb exclaimed weeping, bitterly lamenting, and crying aloud: * “The world rejoiceth, having received deliverance through Thee, * but my womb doth burn, beholding Thy crucifixion, * which Thou hast endured in Thy merciful loving-kindness. * O long-suffering Lord, * Thou abyss and inexhaustible well-spring of mercy, * take pity, and grant forgiveness of sins ** unto those who hymn Thy divine sufferings with faith!”

ODE IV

Irmos: Thou, O Lord, art my strength and Thou art my power, * Thou art my God and Thou art my joy, * Thou Who, while never leaving the bosom of Thy Father, * hast visited our poverty. * Therefore with the Prophet Habbakuk I cry unto Thee, * ‘Glory to Thy power, O Lover of mankind!’

Made strong by grace, the divine and most radiant assembly and choir, the multitude of the martyrs, the victorious army, which had Arethas as its commander, suffered. Let it be hymned with love and honor by those who chant: Glory to Thy power, O Lover of mankind!

Thy divinely wise city, sustained by the knowledge of thee who art resplendent with honorable grey hairs and who struggled manfully against the exceedingly wicked ones, O most noetically rich martyr, seized the trophy and chanted unto the Savior: Glory to Thy power, O Lover of mankind!

Protected by the new law of the life-creating Spirit, and trampling upon the written law, the pious city prevailed with spiritual purity and noble character, chanting unto Christ: Glory to Thy power, O Lover of mankind!

Truly the city of God hath been revealed to be an all-honored and divine habitation of martyrs, and of thee most glorious, great and wondrous things are now chanted; for thou didst lead to the Master a choir of those who chant: Glory to Thy power, O Lover of mankind!

Theotokion: Springing forth from the royal house of David, O Virgin, thou hast given birth to the Word Who ineffably reigneth from before the beginning of time and hath shone forth from thee in a manner past understanding. Wherefore, we, the faithful, call thee, the Theotokos, blessed.

ODE V

Irmos: O Light never-waning, * why hast Thou turned Thy face from me * and why hath the alien darkness surrounded me, * wretched though I be? * But do Thou guide my steps I implore Thee * and turn me back towards the light of Thy commandments.

The divinely blessed assembly, called by God, struggled, and the right victorious ones, strengthening and aiding one another fervently, gloriously assented to be slaughtered for Christ's sake by the iniquitous.

Fortified by faith and kindled with the zeal of piety, Thy favored ones, O Christ, were not afraid of the terror of the most iniquitous ones, and, chastely bound by Thy love, they willingly gave themselves over.

Committing their whole life to the divine forethought and inescapable judgments of God's providence, with goodly boldness the divine assembly, the valiant ones, rushed at the exceedingly wicked, vile and murderous Jews.

Trusting in Thee, and believing on Thy resurrection, O Savior, Thy most valiant martyrs were slain by the iniquitous for confessing Thee, neither protesting nor wailing.

Theotokion: God, the Word of God, Who from before time, is equally existent with the Father, making His abode within thy womb in the richness of His compassion, impoverished Himself and appeared on earth as a man, becoming flesh, O all-hymned Virgin Theotokos.

ODE VI

Irmos: Cleanse me, O Savior, * for many are mine iniquities; * lead me up from the abyss of evils I pray Thee, * for unto Thee have I cried, * and Thou hast hearkened unto me, * O God of my salvation.

Signed with the blood of Christ, the holy and glorious martyrs fervently shed their own blood and have now been deemed worthy to reign with Him.

Mute tongues prophetically spake peace, speechless babes preached Christ, and divinely wise virgins offered themselves to God for piety's sake.

The light which richly shineth forth healings from Christ was apportioned unto thee, O divinely eloquent Arethas; and thou didst depart thereto, still pouring forth the sweat of thy contest.

A multitude of martyrs was divinely led to Thee, O Savior; and leaping for joy in chorus around Thee, the choirs of the saints ask remission of sins for those who ever glorify them.

Theotokion: Ineffably arrayed by assuming flesh from thee to unite Himself with mankind, O thou who knewest not wedlock, He shone forth majesty from Sion on high, illumining the world.

Kontakion of the holy martyrs, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast appeared today ...":

The feast of the passion-bearers hath dawned upon us today * as the harbinger of gladness; ** and celebrating it, we glorify the Lord Who lives in the highest.

Ikos: Illumine my mind with the splendor of the struggles of the valiant Arethas and all the saints who suffered with him; for he, first of all, showed himself to be faithful, manfully doing battle with those who reject the incarnation of Thee Who, in a manner transcending nature, assumed flesh and wast born, that Thou mightest deliver us from deception and show us how to walk without wavering, the path of witness which the spiritual athletes trod, hymning Thee, the Lord Who livest in the highest.

ODE VII

Irmos: **O**nce in Babylon the fire stood in awe * of God's condescension; * for which sake the youths in the furnace, * dancing with joyous steps as in a meadow, chanted: * O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

The torrents of the blood of Thy spiritual athletes pour forth healings upon those who praise their memory with faith and cry out earnestly to Thee, the Creator: O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

The victors put the whole council of the iniquitous to shame, for, adorned with divine understanding and keenness of mind, and rejoicing while being slaughtered, they chanted: O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

As they were wounded with love of Thee, O Christ, the compassionate mothers spared not their children, but, burned alive in the furnace, they chanted unto Thee, the Master, crying aloud: O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

Brightly lighting lamps of virginal struggle, the God-bearers, rejoicing with the wise virgins in the bridal chamber of God, cried out: O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

Theotokion: Thou art the cleansing of souls and the mediatrix of salvation for those who with faith and love proclaim thee to be the Mother of God and likewise cry out to thy Son: O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

ODE VIII

Irmos: In his wrath the Chaldean Tyrant made the furnace blaze, * with heat fanned sevenfold for the servants of God; * but when he perceived that they had been saved by a greater power * he cried aloud to the Creator and Redeemer; * 'ye children bless, ye priests praise, * ye people, supremely exalt Him throughout all ages'.

The martyrs cried out, saying to the God-slayers: "Perfection is clearly not in the law; rather salvation hath been granted through Christ! Wherefore, we are all slain, rejoicing, and we die zealously, chanting unto Him: Ye people, supremely exalt Christ throughout the ages! "

A babe instructed in the mysteries, taught the mindless ones to look to Thy most pure image, O Christ, and to embrace faith in Thy coming to earth; and, compelled by the hands of the all-iniquitous ones, he entered the flame with her who gave him birth, chanting: Ye people, supremely exalt Christ throughout the ages!

Having struggled piously on earth, O martyrs, ye received crowns from Christ in the heavens as is meet, joyfully departing to the habitation of those who rejoice, who chant with faith and cry out unceasingly: Ye people, supremely exalt Christ throughout the ages!

Having vanquished the cruel prince of this world and those who serve his will, O saints, with boldness and ineffable joy ye passed over to the Ruler and Lord of all, crying out: Ye priests, hymn; Ye people, supremely exalt Him throughout the ages!

Theotokion: Pray to thy Son and Lord for us who truly hymn thee in a pure manner, and who confess thee to be the Mother of God, O most pure one; and ask that salvation and the remission of sins be granted to those who with faith chant: Ye priests bless; Ye people, supremely exalt Him throughout the ages!

ODE IX

Irmos: Every ear is awestruck at hearing of God's ineffable condescension, * for the Most High voluntarily descended and assumed flesh, * becoming man in the Virgin's womb; * wherefore we the faithful magnify the most pure Theotokos.

Having shared in death, ye were partakers of the glory of Christ, O holy martyrs, and have been splendidly adorned with a diadem. And ye stand before God, asking for the salvation of our souls, O right glorious ones.

Ye were shown to be lawful soldiers of Christ and invincible martyrs, O all-wise Arethas and those who diligently suffered with thee, together with the women passion-bearers and the virgin maidens. Wherefore, we beseech thee earnestly: Pray on our behalf!

Direct my life, O Word of God, and by the entreaties of Thy favored ones who love Thee, O Master, pilot me, and deem me worthy to have a share with them, overlooking my sins, in that Thou art good and the Lover of mankind.

Theotokion: **T**hou wast the dwelling-place of God, containing the Infinite One, Who before was incorporeal, in thy womb, and having given birth to Him incarnate for our sake, entreat Him, O pure one, that He grant remission of sins unto all who with faith ever magnify thee.

Exapostilarion of the holy martyrs:

Spec.: Mel.: “Hearken, ye women ...”:

God was the fulfiller of the prophecy of Arethas, raising up the courageous Elesbaan, who pursued and slayed legions of the iniquitous, and Negranes, who hath been borne aloft and filled with gladness, unto the bringing low of the impious Omiritus.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion:

Saved by thee, O Lady, we confess thee to be the Theotokos; for thou hast ineffably given birth unto God Who destroyed death by the Cross, and hath drawn to Himself a multitude of martyrs. With them we praise thee, O Virgin.

AT LITURGY

At the beatitudes: 4 from the Oktoechos, and 4 from ODE III of the canon of the holy martyrs.

Seeing Thy Church established by the grace of the Cross, the all-iniquitous children of the Jews, consumed by jealousy, pitilessly tortured Thy children with multifarious wounds, O Thou Who alone lovest mankind.

The impious ones, possessed of a venomous tongue and blaspheming Thee, O Savior, slaughtered those who believed on Thee, Who had delivered them from the ancient torment of our first parents.

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Kontakion of the holy martyrs, in Tone IV:

The feast of the passion-bearers * hath dawned upon us today * as the harbinger of gladness; * and celebrating it, we glorify the Lord Who lives in the highest.

Prokeimenon, in Tone IV: In the saints that are in His earth hath the Lord been wondrous; * He hath wrought all His desires in them.

Verse: I beheld the Lord ever before me, for He is at my right hand, that I might not be shaken.

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, § 330 (HEB. 11: 33-40)

Brethren: The saints through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Alleluia, in Tone IV: The righteous cried, and the Lord heard them, and He delivered them out of all their tribulations.

Verse: Many are the tribulations of the righteous, and the Lord shall deliver them out of them all.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW, § 38 (MT. 10: 32-33, 37-38; 19:27-30)

The Lord said unto His disciples: Whosoever confesses me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.

Communion Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is meet for the upright.